

Saving & Protecting Our Environment Vote YES – Four for The Coast!

September 8, 2006

A Column by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco

Saturday, September 30, Louisiana voters will face many decisions about our state's future as we head to the polls. I urge you to join me and many others throughout our state who are concerned about our environment and committed to saving and protecting our coastal areas by voting YES on the first four Constitutional Amendments.

I believe Louisiana's people will make wise and informed decisions when they vote, and I want to explain why passing these amendments is in our state's very best interest. This week, I'll focus on Amendment Numbers 1 and 2; and another column focusing on Amendment Numbers 3 and 4 will follow. In doing so, I ask for your support in helping save and protect our coast.

If you agree that the passage of these four constitutional amendments is important for our state and future generations, please ask your co-workers, friends and family to join us in voting YES.

Amendment No. 1

Coastal Protection & Restoration Fund / Dedicates Revenues

Constitutional Amendment No. 1 is critical in our fight for a share of offshore oil and gas revenues. With revenue sharing bills pending in both the House and Senate of the U.S. Congress, we are closer than ever to getting Louisiana's fair share of royalties. This amendment will constitutionally dedicate any and all offshore revenues we receive to coastal restoration and hurricane protection. Voting **YES** to this amendment guarantees that these funds will be placed in a constitutionally protected trust, called the Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund.

Voting **YES** makes very clear that, as a coastal state, we value our natural resources and our strategic location as America's Energy Coast and that we are willing to put our money where it belongs – in coastal and wetlands restoration and hurricane protection.

Amendment No. 2

Streamlines & Redirects Government Spending more Effectively/ Dedicates Future Revenues

Constitutional Amendment No. 2 consolidates existing coastal funds and provides for better, more efficient management of revenues. It requires that we deposit 20 percent of any future sale of the state's tobacco settlement directly into the Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund outlined in Amendment 1.

Voting **YES** to Amendment No. 2 streamlines the system and gives the state revenues we will need in the next few years to jump start restoration efforts.

Voting **YES** supports accountability and dedication of future revenues to the coastal trust fund.

Together, we have the opportunity to take giant steps forward on our long term journey of coastal restoration and hurricane protection for Louisiana. Now is the time to step up and be heard. The future economic success of our state and the protection of our coast and our people depend on your support.

September 30, please remember to go to the polls, and be sure **to *Vote YES for our Coast.***

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The Power of Louisiana Voters to Protect the Coast
A Column by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
September 22, 2006

On Saturday, September 30, Louisiana voters have the opportunity to consider changes to the Louisiana constitution which, I believe, will further protect and restore our fragile coast. These changes for our state and future generations will make our communities safer, better protect our unique and bountiful natural resources, and promote productive economic development that helps define our great state.

I know Louisiana's people want to make wise and informed decisions when they vote, and I am grateful for this opportunity to provide them with information on proposed constitutional amendments supported by me and passed by the legislature because I believe these amendments are in our state's very best interest. This week, I'll focus on Amendment Nos. 3 and 4. As I did when I covered the first two amendments, I ask that you consider your role in helping save and protect our coast and coastal communities by giving thoughtful consideration to Amendments 1 through 4.

Amendment No. 3
Consolidates Orleans Region Levee Districts

This amendment consolidates levee districts in the Orleans region and ensures that they are accountable to a greater authority whose oversight includes all levee districts in south Louisiana.

For the first time in our state's history, there will be true oversight over all levee district activities. The consolidated levee districts will report to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority who will ensure greater accountability. Those districts in the Pontchartrain Basin will be required to develop a coordinated protection system since storm impacts to the basin are shared by all parishes around the basin.

Membership of the levee district boards will include engineers and professionals and the districts will be exclusively focused on flood protection responsibilities. This is a key step in ensuring the safety and protection of our communities.

Constitutional Amendment No. 3 is designed to take important steps to ensure the safety and protection of our communities who depend on our levee system. It is also focused on government efficiency and accountability.

Amendment No. 4
Compensates Landowners Fairly

Constitutional Amendment No. 4 brings Louisiana law up to date with the rest of the nation.

If land must be taken for necessary hurricane protection or a coastal restoration project, this amendment provides a fair, efficient and more expedient process for the transaction.

Even more importantly, it ensures that landowners are compensated fairly – they would receive “fair market value” – if their land must be purchased for these important protection and restoration projects.

“Fair market value” is a term we can all understand. It is also the term used by other states throughout the country. But most important, this term eliminates confusion, enables important protection projects to move forward, and assures landowners they will be compensated fairly.

Together, we have the opportunity to move Louisiana giant steps forward on our long term journey toward strong coastal restoration and hurricane protection. Please go to the polls on September 30 and give the “four for our coast” your thoughtful consideration.

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